Fall 2009

Louisiana Conservationist

Your Window to the Outdoors

$2.50

Two NBA legends share their love of the hardwoods

Hunt *ON*
Bag your next big buck on a WMA

Aww, Shucks:
Set your holiday table with baked Italian oysters

Dedicated to the conservation and restoration of Louisiana's natural resources.
Published by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Robert Barham, Secretary

Comments

The Louisiana Hunter Safety Program, administered by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) began in 1968 to provide educational outreach in the areas of basic firearm safety and conservation information for novice hunters of all ages.

Previously, training was provided primarily by National Rifle Association members. But when federal assistance was made available in 1974, LDWF's program expanded by establishing the Hunter's Education section. The section's mission is to better prepare new hunters for the field. Funds, derived through the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (Pittman-Robertson Act), come from an excise tax on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment.

Funding for today's Hunter Education division activities consist of 75 percent Pittman-Robertson Act funds and a 25 percent state match, which utilizes volunteer instructor time as an "in-kind" match.

What once was a three-hour course, has now evolved to 10 hours of instruction by a qualified instructor. At the end of the course, a student must demonstrate the ability to safely handle a firearm. For home study, an optional on-line course or CD-Rom course is available with a required field day exercise to complete the process.

The 1984 Louisiana Legislature passed Act 149 requiring mandatory hunter education training for certain license buyers. The law states that anyone born on or after Sept. 1, 1969, must present to a hunting license vendor, a certificate of satisfactory completion of a Hunter Education course taught or approved by LDWF. Whatever your age, if you plan to hunt out of state, it may be best to work towards your certification now. Some states and providences require Hunter Education certification to purchase a non-resident hunting license at any age.

Statistics indicate the program is working. Since Louisiana's mandatory course requirements became the law, the program has trained over 500,000 students statewide. From a record high of 48 hunting incidents in 1983, the number of incidents has been reduced to a record low of four in 2008.

Bow hunter education is also an option for those who choose that prefer that hunting method. The same guidelines apply and additional information is provided on shot selection, shot placement and tree stand safety. From a pure shooting skills standpoint, LDWF is working with the National Archery in the Schools Program to promote instruction in international-style target archery as an in-school curriculum option. The goal of this effort is to improve educational performance and participation in the shooting sports among students in grades 4 -12. Over half of Louisiana's parish school systems are involved.

If you are interested in becoming a Hunter Education volunteer instructor, LDWF's staff will provide training and all the tools needed for teaching students about hunter responsibility, hunter ethics, wildlife management, firearm safety and game identification, as well as survival and first aid in the field. If target shooting with a bow is your main interest, there is staff available to prepare you to become an instructor within the Archery in the Schools Program.

Education is the best way to get a novice hunter or target shooter involved in an outdoor activity, which can be enjoyed for a lifetime. Consider passing along your hunting knowledge. For more information, go to the department's Web site at *www.wlf.louisiana.gov.*

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2 HARDWOODS

After the NBA, two LEGENDS are *in a new* LEAGUE of their own.

Story by
GlynnHARRIS

Photo: GettyImages.com

STATS

Karl Malone

COLLEGE
18.7 Points Per Game Average
9.3 Rebounds Per Game Average

PROFESSIONAL
36,928 Points Scored
5,238 Assists
14,968 Rebounds
1986 NBA All-Rookie Team
Two -Time NBA MVP
13-Time All-Star
11-Time All-NBA First-Team
Two-Time All-Star Game MVP

LIFETIME
Hunter and Fisherman

Stat card illustrations by Thomas Gresham

In 1963, Willis Reed was knocking the lights out on the basketball court at Grambling State where he earned All-American status as a scoring and rebounding machine. The following year, Reed was drafted in the first round of the NBA by the New York Knicks.

That same year, a baby boy named Karl was born in tiny Summerfield, Louisiana. Karl Malone would grow up to star on the basketball court at Louisiana Tech before being drafted by the Utah Jazz where he attained legendary status.

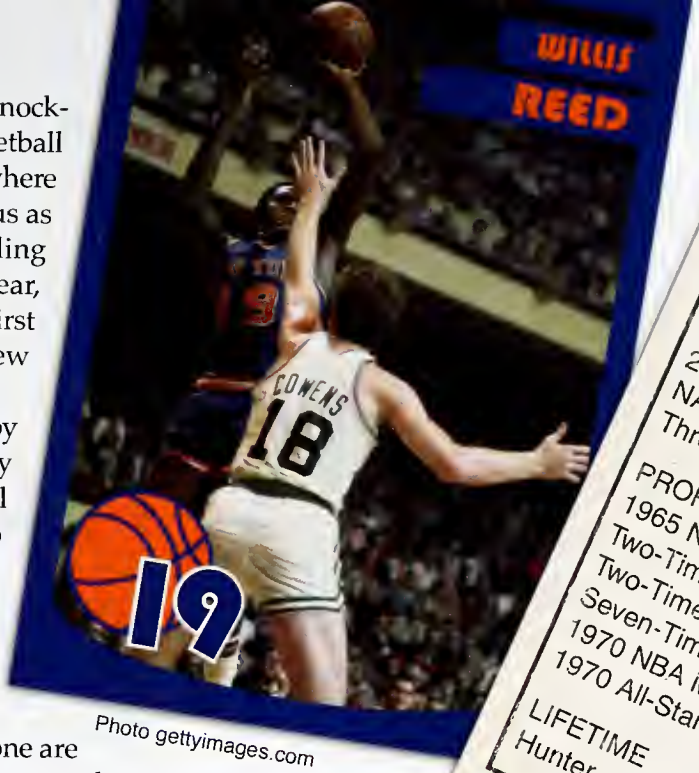

Photo gettyimages.com

Today, both Reed and Malone are retired from the NBA. Their interests have faded from the hardwood where they earned their fame to the "hardwoods" where they're most at home. Both of these north Louisiana super-stars are serious about hunting, fishing and the outdoors.

REED'S RAMBLINGS

Reed was born in the tiny Lincoln Parish hamlet of Hico on June 25, 1942. He moved from Hico to Bernice at the age of 6 where he established himself on the basketball court, earning a scholarship to Grambling State University. After a stellar career with the Tigers where he averaged more than 26 points and 21 rebounds per game, it was on to the NBA when he was drafted in the first round by the New York Knicks.

Reed's 10 year NBA career was simply out of this world. For starters, he helped lead the Knicks to two NBA championships, was named Rookie of the Year in 1965 and played in seven NBA All-star games. Incredibly, in 1970, Reed was the first player in NBA history to be named Most Valuable Player in the NBA All-star game, NBA regular season and NBA playoffs all in the same year. That year, he was also named to the All-NBA first team and NBA All-defensive first team, and was named ABC's Wide World of Sports Athlete of the Year and Sporting News' NBA's Most Valuable Player. In 1982, Reed was enshrined in the Basketball Hall of Fame and his #19 jersey number was later retired. This year, he had his countenance emblazoned on a Wheaties cereal box.

While Reed was wowing fans at Madison Square Garden, he was doing something else away from the gaze of his adoring fans.

"I was slipping out after practice to a friend's farm, hunting deer with my bow," he said.

"I got into hunting as a kid by going with my dad, Willis Sr. Dad had some good dogs and he hunted squirrels during the day and 'coons at night. It was just natural for me to get hooked on hunting because I was exposed to it at an early age. The worse whipping my dad ever gave me was the time I took his dog out chasing rabbits; it just about ruined the dog for treeing squirrels and 'coons," Reed explained, chuckling.

Scanning the walls of his spacious home nestled among pines and ponds just north of Grambling, there is no doubt that hunting has been a big part of his life with mounts of trophy whitetail deer, mule deer, moose, caribou, cougar and antelope adorning the walls.

"While I was playing ball, I hunted with my friends whenever we had the

Photo by Glynn Harris

Photo by Glynn Harris

ABOVE: Reed's trophy buck that he shot using a muzzleloader.

BELOW: Reed holds a Wheaties cereal box which displays a picture of himself while playing in the NBA.

ABOVE (right): Willis Reed shows some of the "tools of his trade."

chance," Reed noted. "Today, a group of us guys have a hunting club over in Alabama where we hunt deer and turkeys, and we're headed up to Montana to hunt elk and deer this fall. I'm hoping to take a mule deer with my bow."

Reed reflected on his retirement from playing basketball and why he decided to quit the game when he did.

"In 1974, the season after winning an NBA championship, we were playing the Lakers in Los Angeles. I was running down the court when something snapped in my right knee," Reed explained. "The doctors checked it and said I'd need surgery to repair the damage and at that moment, my mind was made up. I decided to retire because there was some more hunting I needed to do and some more mountains I wanted to climb. I had two championship rings and some nice awards and I decided it was time to hang it up. I've never second-guessed my decision and today, I'm happy where I am."

Where Reed is today is some 15 miles from Hico where he first saw the light of day 67 years ago.

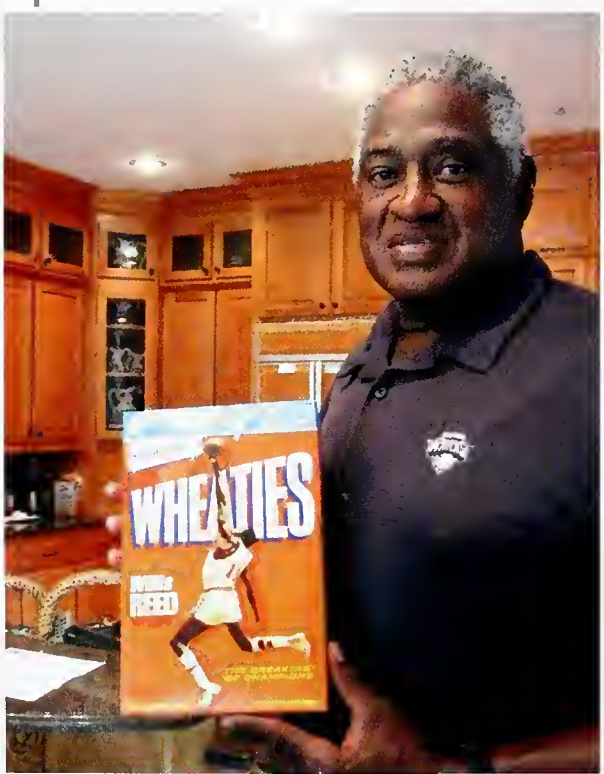

Photo by Glynn Harris

MALONE'S MEANDERINGS

I sat down recently with Karl Malone in the trophy room at his beautiful and spacious home in Ruston.

Enough has been written about Malone's basketball exploits to fill Tech's lofty Wyly Tower with clippings. As much as I was a Karl Malone fan during his round-ball playing days, my interest is in

another side of this man. He is a very serious student of hunting, fishing and the outdoors, not just since his retirement but throughout his entire life.

"It started early for me," Malone began. "My brother Terry and I became interested in hunting squirrels, but there was no gun in the house. My mom put a little 410-single-barrel on lay-away for us. That's what we started out with and I killed my first squirrel when I was 9 years old. I ran out of the woods with my squirrel as fast as I could to show it to my mom."

"She knew how important getting involved with the outdoors was in raising youngsters out in the country and she saw to it that we had the chance to start enjoying these experiences at an early age," Malone said.

"After I started playing professional basketball, the idea around was that hunting wasn't 'politically correct;' wasn't 'cool'. You tell that to a kid who grew up in Summerfield, La. My attitude was and still is - I'm going to hunt. It's a passion I grew up with, one that never left me."

A gaze around Malone's trophy room at his home validates his passion for hunting. As many as 50 mounts grace the walls and floor of the room. Many are full body mounts including bear, mountain lions, antelope, bobcat, fox, raccoon, mountain goat, bighorn sheep and caribou. Shoulder mounts of dozens of other species gaze down from the walls.

Malone has the privilege and opportunity to hunt literally all over the world if he wants to. Yet, there is one sport that perhaps surprisingly emerges as his favorite and it undoubtedly is a throwback to his growing up years in Summerfield.

"I have hunted lots of places and taken my share of big game, and I love it all. However," Malone said, "my overall favorite hunting sport is to take my three dogs, Boss, Newt and Missy to my property near Farmerville and squirrel hunt."

Malone has to pick and

Photo by Glynn Harris

Karl Malone and his squirrel dog "Boss" have a special relationship.

Photo by Glynn Harris

Photo by Glynn Harris

Malone proudly displays some of the trophy bucks he has bagged.

choose those times when he's able to hit the woods with his dogs. His business enterprises and his affiliation with numerous outdoors oriented organizations demand much of his time.

"I'm involved with the Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife, an organization that concentrates and recognizes heroes, which includes military personnel who have been wounded. We give them their hunt of a lifetime and it doesn't cost them a cent.

"I have a dream to become involved in taking handicapped kids hunting. I'd love nothing more than to sit in a blind with a special youngster and serve as guide."

"You can learn so much not only about wildlife but about the land when you spend time outdoors. I get a kick out of experimenting with food plots, what to plant, when to plant, how to prepare the ground to make it produce what it's capable of to benefit wildlife," Malone said.

Malone earned his "Mailman" nickname while still a student at Tech. According to an entry found on ESPN.com, well-known Louisiana writer, Teddy Allen, working with the sports information office at Tech then, was looking for a nickname to spice up his game notes. At first he tried "The Postman" but changed it to Mailman because he liked the alliteration "Mailman Malone."

The Mailman delivered then; he's still delivering today but the product he serves up is more likely to be found, not on the hardwood, but out in the hardwoods.

Willis Reed and Karl Malone; two NBA legends right at home in the woods of north Louisiana.

Glynn Harris has written outdoor columns for more than 35 years for newspapers, state, regional and national magazines and is on-air host of four weekly outdoor radio programs. Harris lives in Ruston with his wife, Kay, is the father of three daughters and has nine grandchildren.

All Pros (No Cons)

LDWF File photos

Hunting and Recreational Activities on Wildlife Management Areas

•Hunters that cannot afford to buy or lease land can hunt on WMAs for free with a valid license.

•There are a variety of WMAs around the state, which provides great access for hunters.

•Most WMAs have deer seasons for regular gun hunters, bow hunters and primitive gun hunters.

•There are special seasons available for youth hunters, which increases their chances for a successful hunt.

•Most WMAs have camping areas available for the entire family to experience a weekend of hunting and outdoor fun.

It's just better on a WMA.

Hunting the Circuit

Story and Photographs by
DavidMORELAND

Deer hunting is the most popular hunting activity in Louisiana. Last season over 225,000 hunters obtained deer tags for hunting. While all of the private land in this state is either posted or leased, residents of the Bayou State have access to over a million acres of public land for deer hunting. This is know as the circuit.

For many of those who hunt the circuit, the last weekend of October is generally highlighted on their calendars. For these circuit hunters, this marks the beginning of the deer gun season. Their destination is usually a wildlife management area (WMA) in the western part of the state, such as Clear Creek, West Bay or Fort Polk. Some hunters will visit the two Forest Service preserves, Red Dirt or Catahoula. Following this, many of these hunters will be on Jackson-Bienville WMA the weekend before Thanksgiving. A few may have already checked out the action on Union WMA.

Thanksgiving weekend is a busy time for the circuit hunters. All of the WMAs will be open for deer hunting the Friday after Thanksgiving, and most of the circuit hunters will be at their favorite WMA for three days of deer hunting and camping. The circuit continues into the days of December. Some areas will have an either-sex deer hunt following the Thanksgiving hunts. Many will be open for primitive gun hunting in early December. Following Christmas, the WMAs in the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Delta are the stop for circuit hunters seeking the big bucks that become active during the rut in this portion of the state. In addition to the buck-only days, these WMAs will also offer several days of primitive gun hunting for those circuit hunters who have not quite had their fill of deer hunting. This is especially beneficial for those circuit hunters hunting the Area 6 WMAs, where the rut runs late.

Many of the circuit hunters reside in the coastal parishes, while some live in the urban areas of the state's cities. There are even those circuit hunters who either own or lease land for deer hunting, but know how good the deer resource and hunting is on these wildlife management areas and choose to hunt the circuit as well. I hunt on private land in East Feliciana Parish but I also hunt the circuit: Jackson-Bienville for the early either-sex hunt; Pearl River for primitive hunting; and back to Jackson-Bienville for some late bucks-only hunting.

Hunting the WMA circuit can be quite challenging. On private lands, hunters can bait and feed deer and set up permanent stands. These activities are not permitted on the public lands. Hunters must go out and find the feeding areas, determine the movement of deer on the area and decide where to set up their portable stands and hopefully connect with a deer. It is somewhat like wilderness hunting, pack in and pack out. Hunters may leave the stands on the area but not in the hunting position, attached to a tree. Hunters must also have the stand tagged with their name, address and license number. Most of the either-sex hunts occur on weekends to provide good opportunity for hunters on their days off. However, inclement weather can play havoc on deer movement, thus many areas provide other days of hunting opportunity. The gun season on WMAs is not as long as on the private lands, thus hunters get on the circuit and move around from area to area as the hunting season progresses.

The WMA circuit provides hunting opportunity for bowhunters, gun hunters, muzzleloader and primitive firearms hunters. The bow season opens at the same time as that of the Deer Area where the WMA is located and runs through the entire season. However, gun season dates are different, so the first thing a hunter needs to do is read the current hunting regulations booklet to find out when the area is open. Gun hunters must wear both a "hunter's orange" vest and hat. Deer hunters should be aware that there are duck hunters and small game hunters also using these areas and should follow all

Scouting during the early primitive season hunt on Pearl River WMA paid dividends for Dave Guidry (right) who bagged this deer. David Stafford (left) helped find it in the dense woods.

ABOVE: Check-in stations are located at most of the heavily used access points coming into a WMA.

NEXT PAGE: Most WMAs have designated campgrounds for both tent and trailer campers.

the rules for safe hunting. I have often heard people say that WMAs are not safe because there are too many other hunters, but hunting accident statistics do not support this statement.

Like hunting as a whole, there has been a decline in hunters using the wildlife management areas. Hunters often like to hunt areas and sites on a WMA that are easily accessible, and this can cause hunters to pile up in one location. The circuit hunter should always have a back-up location in case other hunters are in his area of first choice. Most areas have ATV trails that provide access into an area. There are specific ATV regulations that hunters need to be aware of, so again, read and understand the current hunting regulations. There are also plenty of areas where hunters can get away from the crowds. Knowing how to use a compass and read a map can be very useful for the hunter desiring to avoid heavily hunted areas. Many areas have good boat access into the WMA. Here again, the circuit hunter needs to have all the proper gear for his boat: life vests; registration; etc.

Based upon harvest data compiled by Scott Durham, Deer Program Biologist for LDWF, the circuit hunter has a pretty good chance of bringing home some venison for the freezer. Thirty years ago, the average deer kill on the WMAs was around one deer per 22 hunter efforts. This past season it was one deer per 11 hunter efforts. Over 5,000 deer were harvested on WMAs last year. This year, all harvested deer on a WMA will have to be tagged with a hunter's tag and validated within 72 hours. Hunters must have the appropriate hunting licenses including the WMA Hunting Permit (ages 18-59). All hunters must check in at a self-clearing station on each day of hunting and check out when the hunt is over, documenting the harvest on the check out card. The daily limit is one antlered deer and one antlerless deer (when legal) per day.

Thistlethwaite is the only WMA in the state that has an antler restriction program. On all other areas, any buck with visible boney antler material is considered a legal buck. On Thistlethwaite, a legal buck is one that has at least four points on one side or has unbranched antlers (a spike buck). Bucks that do not meet these antler criteria cannot legally be harvested. This is an experimental program that was established by LDWF to determine if antler restrictions are a good method for managing deer in Louisiana. This program was designed to run for 10 years. To date the program has not proved to be very successful. Although the yearling (1.5 year old) buck harvest has been reduced, the harvest of adult bucks has not increased substantially. In the past, Thistlethwaite has produced record book deer, so there is some anticipation for this experiment to produce more records.

According to Durham, the WMA circuit annually produces some quality and trophy class bucks. Many hunters are aware of this, and this is one reason they hunt the circuit. The WMAs located in the agricultural regions near the Mississippi, Red and Atchafalaya rivers

have excellent bottomland hardwood habitat along with the agricultural crops. Good habitat will produce good deer. Last year on the Red River/Three Rivers WMA complex a buck was harvested that weighed 225 pounds, had 5.5-inch bases, 20-inch main beams and a 16-inch inside spread. But don't overlook the upland hardwood/pine woods. On Jackson-Bienville a 240 pound buck with eight points was harvested; this deer had 6-inch bases and 21-inch main beams. I grew up in this part of the state and it is always good to return home to visit family and friends and spend some time in the woods in pursuit of these big boys. Last year, Loggy Bayou WMA produced the largest WMA buck, a 248-pound, 10-pointer with 8-inch bases and 20-inch beams.

Camping is a big part of hunting the circuit. Most WMAs have designated sites for camping, with both tent and trailer spaces. Some areas offer water and electricity, while others are more primitive. Persons who are not hunting but are just enjoying the company of the hunters must also check in at the self-clearing station. Most hunting parties have a designated cook, someone who knows how to use a black pot. Hunters need good nourishment when pursuing the elusive white-tail. Stories are shared around the camp fire about the day's events and plans are made for the next day. All of this is what makes hunting the circuit a total outdoor experience. Good deer hunting, enjoying time with friends and family and with a little luck, venison in the freezer or a trophy rack for the wall. If you have never hunted the circuit, maybe now is the time to give it a try.

David Moreland is a former biologist and administrator with LDWF. ***Outdoor Roots*** *is his regular column in* ***Louisiana Conservationist.***

Avian Lure

Sometimes catching fish is
as following diving

Story by
JohnFELSHER

A few hundred yards across the bay, dozens of birds splashed into the water. Beneath the squawking feathered melee, baitfish jumped from snapping jaws only to find themselves snatched into the air by ravaging beaks.

"Let's go!" the captain shouted, dropping his binoculars and putting the juice to the outboard. "We're going to have some fun now!"

Steering wide of the activity, the captain maneuvered into the wind, circling the flocking birds. About 100 yards upwind from the flock, he cut the outboard. Using the trolling motor just enough to steer in the proper direction, he let the winds carry us toward the surface commotion.

As we drifted into casting range, we both immediately hooked up. Tossing plastic shrimp imitations, we doubled on speckled trout in the 3-pound range. Dropping the fish quickly onto the boat deck, we threw back toward the ruckus to entice more trout. After about 20 minutes, the action slowed as the fish and birds moved elsewhere. We piled a dozen or so flopping speckled trout into the ice chest while scanning for more diving birds. Action can come quickly, but in spurts and end just as abruptly while chasing birds.

From beneath the waves, roving schools of speckled trout, redfish, jacks, mackerel and other predators herd menhaden, shrimp and mullets as they attack from all sides. Voracious critters force the bait toward the surface where their terrified prey run out of escape room. With keen eyesight and swift wings, birds miss little "news" on the water. From the air, they can quickly spot moving shrimp and baitfish or flashing trout. As panicking baitfish or shrimp attempt to flee on the surface, birds swoop down to steal their share of the protein. With toothy mouths slicing at them from below and sharp beaks ripping them from above, few shrimp and baitfish die of old age.

"Looking for diving birds is a good way to find trout," said Capt. Mike Gallo of Angling Adventures of Louisiana who fishes Lake Pontchartrain, Lake Borgne

and adjacent marshes near Slidell. "Trout follow the bait. Birds can see that. Find the bait and you'll find the trout."

Diving birds could turn a previously humdrum day into a spectacular fish-catching frenzy in minutes, but not all birds hitting the water indicate feeding fish. Small birds might skim the surface snatching tiny morsels that won't interest trout. A pelican may dive to scoop up a single mullet or nothing at all. To greatly benefit from such feathered lookouts, learn to "read" the birds.

"Trout follow the bait. Birds can see that. Find the bait and you'll find the trout."

"I watch what the birds are doing," said Capt. Guy Stansel of Hackberry Rod and Gun Club who fishes Calcasieu Lake near Lake Charles, La. "Birds dive into the water all the time, but that doesn't necessarily mean they're feeding. People can waste a lot of time chasing after every bird that splashes the water. I can tell by their actions if they're feeding or not. If they hover over one spot and get in a frenzy or all dive at once, they're over fish."

Some birds make better scouts than others. Seagulls often give the best avian advice. Some anglers call terns "liar birds" since they may dive for no apparent reason. Pelicans can also fool people. A pelican plunging from the skies to splash into the water doesn't always indicate a school of feeding fish, but large seagulls and pelicans hunting together usually means food for all.

Sportsmen don't need to spot hundreds of birds swarming like in a scene from an Alfred Hitchcock movie either. Sometimes, just one or two actively diving birds may mark hungry fish. Sitting birds can also signify nearby fish. Frequently, birds land on the water to rest after filling their bellies or wait for the next surface eruption.

"Sitting birds are usually near the school of fish, often right on top of them," Stansel said. "If the school went down, the birds wait for fish to come back up. Sometimes, we can drift into sitting birds and catch plenty fish. Sometimes, the trout go down to regroup, but they haven't left the area. They'll come back up."

To confirm fishy activity, look for corroborating signs instead of rushing after any birds flocking on the horizon. Study the situation with a good pair of binoculars. Look for bait jumping or fish striking on the surface. Watch for birds hovering just a few feet off the water without landing. Notice if the birds catch anything. Look for screeching birds chasing each other through the air. Birds often try to steal from their comrades. Also, try to determine the direction the action moves and get ahead of the maelstrom.

"Watch the direction of the birds closely," Stansel said. "They'll move with the fish, disappear, pop up and disappear again. Watch the tides. Almost every school of fish will be moving in the same direction on any given day. It's different every day, but I find that fish schools move against the tide more often than with it. I try to determine which direction the fish are moving and get ahead of them so the fish come to me."

Whenever possible, use the wind or tide to push the boat because nothing shuts down a feeding frenzy like a propeller driven by a 250-horsepower outboard. Living primarily by their sense of feel, fish can easily detect vibrations. Use the trolling motor sparingly. Although it makes much less noise than an outboard, a whirling electric prop still creates vibrations fish can feel. Avoid jumping around in the boat, banging lids or making other unnecessary noises that might radiate through the hull. Noise carries long distances over water.

"The key to catching big fish is to keep quiet," Stansel explained. "People think trolling motors are quiet, but they are not. They spook fish. Drift with the wind and make as long a cast as possible. Don't talk too much or make a lot of racket in the boat."

Stop well upwind, even farther in

Photo by John Felsher

To target large trout that might lurk under schools of small trout and ladyfish that attack bait high, use heavier, bigger baits to get past them in the water column.

extremely clear water or a calm day, and make long casts. Lipless crankbaits and spoons can sail long distances on the air currents. In a frenzied school, fish typically hit anything that comes near them, but occasionally, trout grow finicky. Anglers can hurl large, heavy topwater baits incredible distances, but fish may key on smaller baits. Notice what the fish eat. If they want small, silver baitfish, throw something small and silver. If anglers need to use light, difficult to cast lures, they might want to attach them to popping corks for added casting heft.

When fishing around diving birds, anglers regularly catch smaller trout and often fill easy limits quickly. However, giant trout usually don't congregate under swarming birds. Trophy specks tend to hunt alone or with a few similar-sized fish. They prefer one big fishy meal to slurping many small shrimp or menhaden. Frequently, lunker trout lurk just beneath a school of small trout or ladyfish. As the small fish pick off shrimp or baitfish near the surface, monster specks, possibly joined by huge redfish, follow below the school, waiting to gulp any hapless small trout that wanders within range.

Swimbaits on heavy jigheads, crankbaits or suspending jerkbaits make excellent choices for targeting monster specks hovering beneath the school trout and ladyfish. Work these baits slowly just over the bottom and fish the edges of the school some distance away from the focus of the bird attacks.

"Fishing for big trout is a little different than fishing for numbers," Stansel explained. "It can be pretty slow waiting for that one big strike. Sometimes, we have to work hard to get that one big strike. Bigger trout eat more fish so use something that looks like a big baitfish."

"Bird hunters" may find thrilling action in almost any weather, but calm winds and clear water create optimum conditions for birds to spot bait. The best time to "go birding" generally occurs in late summer or fall as shrimp begin migrating from the marshes to the Gulf of Mexico. However, anglers might find good bird activity during any month anywhere in the state.

John Felsher is a full-time frelance writer and photographer. He has worked for several newspapers and hosted his own radio and TV shows in Lake Charles, La.

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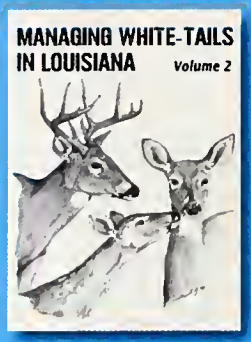

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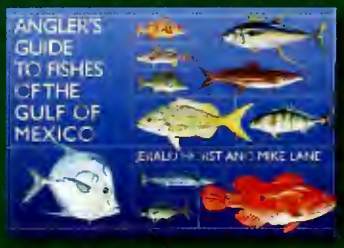

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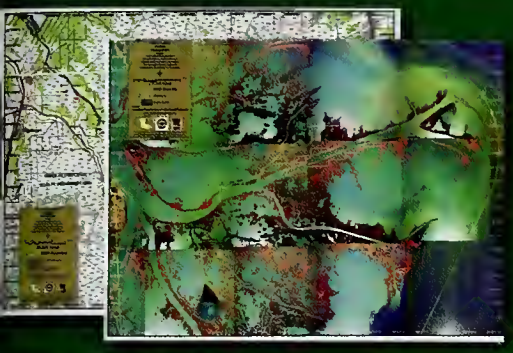

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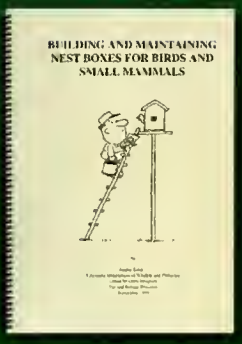

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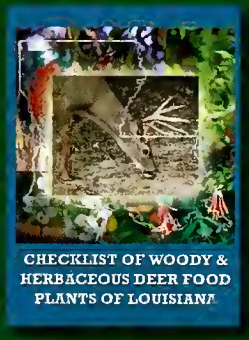

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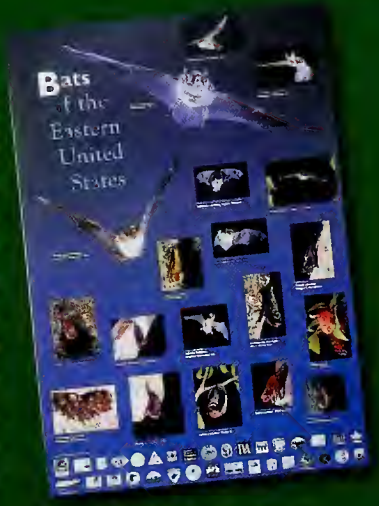

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Photos from Morgan City Archives

Story by
JeraldHORST

The land is called "Terrebonne," which translates from French as "good earth" or "good land." And a good land it is. Terrebonne Parish is the second largest parish in Louisiana, plunked down squarely on the center of the state's coastline.

The northern part of the parish produces a rich harvest of sugarcane from its flat, fertile soils. But the parish is 90 percent wetlands, which is where many of its surface riches come from. Historically, those wetlands produced a treasure trove of cypress timber and a seemingly endless supply of fur animals. Fishing was and is important. The parish is by far the largest seafood producer in Louisiana. A quarter of the state's seafood harvest comes from Terrebonne. The haul includes freshwater and saltwater finfish, oysters, crabs and shrimp.

It's a good place to live off of the land.

The man is Percy B. Dardar, Sr. By some accounts he is a rebel, a self-styled tough guy. By other accounts, he is a hard-working, self-made entrepreneur and principled man that refuses to be pushed down.

Outside the Terrebonne Parish community of Pointe au Chien, few would recognize him as a Native American or as he calls himself with no embellish-

One Man One Land

Photo of commercial fisherman, Percy Dardar by Jerald Horst

ment, an "Indian." The 69-year-old man has striking features, with deep brown eyes and a full head of curly black hair. He often refers to his tribe as being Houma, and explains that there are "seven or eight different tribes"mixed together in the community, and that they are lumped together under the name "Houma" for the sake of convenience.

At best count, the remnants of eight Indian tribes exist in the whole of Louisiana: Houma; Chitamacha; Coushatta; Louisiana Band of Choctaw; Clifton Choctaw; Choctaw Apache; Jena Choctaw; and Tunica-Biloxi. Houma Indians, the tribe that Dardar affiliates with, are the most numerous and also the poorest.

As he reflects on his early years, "I knew I was an Indian growing up, but I could only speak French," Dardar said. He said that the community was so poor, that its name Pointe au Chien was very fitting, which translates in English to "point of dogs."

"In the school in St, Bernard I couldn't speak a word of English and the teacher couldn't speak French," said Dardar. "She thought I was clowning around and punished me. I finally learned to speak a little bit of English when I was 10 years old."

Although Dardar spent little time in school, his education in hard work and making a living from natural resources was thorough. He began working in sugar cane fields with his father at age 5. From 6-years to 9-years old he went on wintertime muskrat trapping trips to St. Bernard Parish, also with his father. At only eight years old Dardar began working on oyster boats from Golden Meadow. While on the boats he was able to see more of the world, from St Bernard Parish to Pass Christian and Biloxi, Mississippi.

"I went to school only eight months in

LEFT PAGE: (left) Fellow Terrebonne commercial fisherman and Dardar's close friend, Randolph LaBauve (extreme right), leading shrimpers in a picket to protest late shrimp season opening.

LEFT PAGE: (right) In the first shrimp factories, all peeling was done by hand, typically by the wives of the community's fisherman.

Terrebonne Parish is one of Louisiana's largest producer of oysters.

my life," said Dardar. "I went to church schools at the end of Pointe au Chien for five months, and then later I went to school for three months in St Bernard Parish, when my daddy went over there to trap for muskrats."

When Dardar was 10, in addition to working as a muskrat farmer, his father also became a crab fisherman.

"There was hardly no cash. We salted meat in crocks and canned vegetables in glass jars,"said Dardar. "Everybody had fruit trees-bananas, fig and pear. For oil we used pig lard. We lived off the land. When we killed rabbits or deer, we shared with the neighbors."

His father shrimped with cast nets and would make pretty good money. He also trammel netted for fish in the winter after fur trapping season was over. The shrimp industry started in Pointe au Chien about 1960, after a shrimp factory had been established in 1958.

At the ripe age of 12-years-old, Dardar was captain of an oyster boat out of Bayou Lafourche for 10 years, before returning to Pointe au Chien to make it on his own.

While learning his way in the industry, Dardar was in the midst of a predominately white, male-oriented business. As one of the very few Native-American fishermen, he observed what the other fisherman were doing and improved his methods. He started shrimping in a Lafitte skiff during shrimp season and working on paying jobs in the winter. It was on one of those jobs that he was severely injured, when he fell off a railroad bridge in Morgan City. The injury was so debilitating that no one would hire him. Subsequently, he made up his mind to stick with commercial fishing.

Dardar expanded by putting up stationary wing nets (also called wharf nets). Soon he was up to 12 nets and later, at his peak, he had 20. It was more than he could handle by himself, so he hired people.

Learning from his experience as an oyster boat captain, he stepped into the oyster industry by acquiring 200 acres of oyster leases. Through shrewd purchases he increased his oyster lease holdings to 18,000 acres. Seven boats harvested oysters for him on shares.

Between other activities, Dardar gill-netted for speckled trout and redfish. Fruits of his labor began to surface when Dardar built the biggest house in Pointe au Chien, a three-story-and-an-attic,

BELOW LEFT: Muskrat trapping was a profitable enterprise, but involved the family's children as well as adults.

BELOW RIGHT: Before Louisiana shrimp was sold fresh, shrimp were dried on wooden platforms for preservation. Here, platform workers "dance" on dried shrimp to remove the shells before they are sacked for export.

Photo from Morgan City Archives

Photo from the William D. Chauvin Collection Louisiana State Archives

8,000-square-feet home and bought fancy automobiles. Dardar was a self-made success by any standard.

Changing Tides

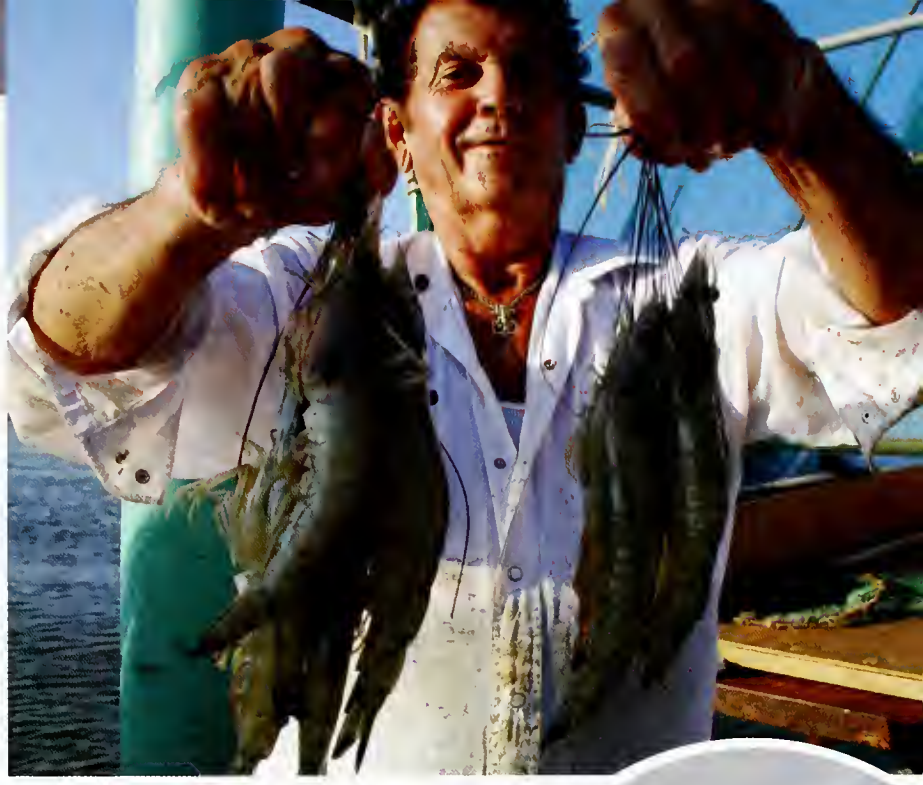
But things changed. First, in 1988, redfish were taken out of commercial trade. Next, in 1998, the use of gill nets was no longer allowed. He describes the measures as having made him "...feel angry at the whole world."

Mother Nature bore all during the 2008 hurricane season. Hurricanes Ike and Gustav delivered severe punches to Terrebonne Parish. Dardar's wharf nets were destroyed and his oyster reefs were heavily damaged. His large home was flooded. It still sits in upper Pointe au Chien, gutted and only partially restored.

He has had seven heart attacks and three strokes, and has 20 stints in his arteries. After being shot 17 different times Dardar carries enough lead in his body to require chelating treatments.

But, he has mellowed with time. Once known as the most confrontational of men, he took quick offense at any slight directed toward him as an Indian. When he took offense, he took action. Now he says that he has learned to talk and listen more. Perhaps, this change can be attributed to the maturity that comes with age. Or maybe some of the change is due to two Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries game wardens, Sammy Martin and Bryan Marie, who have had numerous encounters with Dardar on both sides of the law. Forty-three year-old Bryan Marie grew up in Terrebonne Parish and his father went into the oyster business after stepping down as a game warden himself.

But Marie doesn't feel that his background is why he was able to develop a rapport with Dardar.



"I think that I treated him with respect, like a human being, not a target," said Marie. "Of course, I followed behind Sammy Martin, who I think caught him a few times, but at the same time reached out to him."

"Pointe au Chien has always been a fishing community. In their minds, the area belonged to them-but in reality, it didn't. Slowly but surely their livelihood was taken from them. Marie goes on. "When I was young, people thought that Percy controlled Pointe au Chien. Then I got older and I found out that things weren't like that. Other Pointe au Chien people look at him as an icon because he would stand up to others.

"He would do what he believed in. He didn't care what we thought, he did what he wanted. I wish that I could say that I played a role in calming him down, but I think that time did that."

In spite of health problems and the wear and tear of a rough life, Dardar is determined to rebuild. He sits silently for a moment, and then says, "I am going to keep fishing as long as I live."

ABOVE: Wing nets are effective at capturing night-migrating shrimp.

Jerald Horst is a retired LSU professor of fisheries and lives in Franklinton, Louisiana. He is an active writer whose two most recent books are Trout Masters: How Louisiana's Best Anglers Catch the Lunkers and The Louisiana Seafood Bible: Shrimp.

The Early Bird gets the Creek Bass

Story by
PeteCOOPER

Last winter was really hard on this old boy. For some unknown reason, by early January, the redfish in the canals on the Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge had disappeared. Hurricane Ike had spread so much un-harvestable rice across southwest Louisiana that the specklebellies were eating anywhere they wanted. I couldn't even catch a decent fish from Lake Martin on a dare, fly fishing or otherwise. By the first of March I was verging on becoming a bona fide basket case!

Relief eventually came from a posting on the Louisiana fly-fishing Web site *www.laflyfish.com*. It proclaimed that the originator had been putting some pretty good hits on the spotted bass that inhabited a certain Florida parish stream. Notably, some of those hits took place late the previous month.

That was quite interesting, since during a lifetime - literally - of fishing for bass in creeks, I had never even considered doing so in March, much less in February!

Photo by Pete Cooper

Poppers are suprisingly effective on late-winter creek-bass.

But the data provided by fly fishermen is usually fairly reliable, so on March 7 I sallied forth to verify it, and I included that date for emphasis.

In some six hours I caught 20 bass! Granted, most were small, but one of them could have equaled my state record fly-caught spot. All of them struck poppers, and the stream - one of Louisiana's scenic rivers, which I had not fished in almost 20 years could not have worn a more appealing face. I was ecstatic!

So a friend and I made another trip to it four days later - that's March 11-and still winter, in case that slipped by you. He's just learning the fine points of fly-fishing for creek-bass and only caught 10, and since I was spending a lot of time tutoring him, I only caught 12. Again, most of them were fairly small - typical of that particular stream, but there were also a few very respectable ones.

And by that afternoon I had reached the point of being almost giddy with my "discovery."

So a week later, I decided to apply my newfound winter tactics to another scenic river a hundred miles or so north of and at a much higher elevation than the creek of my revelation. Sadly, though, on my first day there it was cloudy, and much too rowdy from a recent rainfall for decent fly-fishing. But I did manage to catch one absolutely lovely spot before the adverse conditions drove me back to the truck.

Two days later the stream had regained a much more friendly disposition, and after a 50-degree morning low and in bright high pressure, I caught seven spots and a largemouth, half of which were fine creek-bass by anyone's standards.

I also found the forest full of blooming dogwoods.

It seems like the older I get, the thought "What have I been missing!" arises more and more often! For sure, I've apparently been missing a lot by not fly-fishing for creek-bass during late winter. Have you been neglectful too? If so, here are some pointers that will hopefully lead you to many enjoyable days during that period.

First of all - and in my opinion most importantly, make your trips long enough after the most recent rainfall for the creek to have regained its normal composure. High, dirty, and hard-running water creates too many obstacles for both the fisherman and the fish. Typically fish tend to hide behind some

Photo by Pete Cooper

ABOVE: During the winter, bass that are found in Louisiana's creeks inhabit the same type of water they are found during the warm months.

form of current-breaking structure and wait it out before they begin to feed again.

And the fisherman can get into a serious bind if he tries to wade a creek in such conditions!

Once you decide the creek should have gotten back to normal (If there really is such a thing), make your trip during a sunny period with relatively warm afternoon temperatures - mid-60s, anyway. Sunshine is the key. Conversely, avoid going after a very low morning temperature unless significant warm and bright sunlight is in the forecast. During my days of creek-fishing in Missouri, I often had good action after a light morning freeze provided the afternoon was sunny and at least mild.

Speaking of "mild," the water won't be! Do not try to wet-wade a creek during this time! You may not get hypothermia, but we can't have you catching a cold and blaming me for it! Waders are required, full-length if you already have some, waist-waders if you don't and decide to try this opportunity. Those will be more comfortable, and less expensive than the full-sized versions, which are seldom necessary hereabouts in stream-conditions that are suitable for fishing. Notice that I did not mention hip boots? They are not appropriate in this time and place due to the danger of overtopping them.

As might be assumed, the best fishing doesn't seem to get started until mid-morning - when you'd imagine the water would begin to warm a bit with the rising sun. Conversely, just like they do in every other time and place, the bass will primarily be found in the shade - where the water tends to be cooler than where it is sunlit! You figure that out - I can't. Perhaps creek-bass are simply fond of "sleeping in". Whatever, begin in mid-morning and prospect the deeper pockets and pools that are shaded.

On that note, bass seem to hold station in the exact or same type of spots in winter as they do during the rest of the year. Therefore, if you catch and release one from any given pocket, the fish might still be there on your next trip. They may even be reluctant to strike, especially if the water has remained basically unchanged. On the other hand, if a minor flood has occurred since your last

U.S.F.W.S. Photo

Largemouth bass caught on fly-rod and popping bug.

trip, some fish will have been displaced, and you can very likely find "fresh" ones in the same places you fished previously. So while a quick follow-up trip can be a good one, a trip made after the creek recedes from a charge of high water is often better.

While I have caught creek-bass on sinking flies, I greatly prefer poppers. Initially, I didn't know how the fish would respond to them in winter, especially since there are so few terrestrials around at that time. Maybe the crawfish - which make up a major part of a creek-bass's diet throughout much of the year - are not very abundant yet, and the fish are looking away from bottom for their groceries. I did see several fish chasing minnows on the surface, so that may be a reason for this fly's success. In any case, the deeper water that typically holds the bass also tends to hold logs and blow-downs which will readily foul sinking flies. A popper is less likely to do that.

Present it just upstream of a likely spot and let the current float it through the area while you give it slow to moderately-paced soft pops. Do not pick the fly up for another try until it has drifted well downstream of the spot. And always make a second shot at a promising pocket. It appears that even a creek-conditioned bass can have a bit of difficulty locating and then running down a fly before it drifts out of his range of influence. However, after his first attempt he is alert and can zero in on it on the second presentation.

Just remember to not disturb the spot prior to making that second presentation.

Not too surprisingly, the same types and sizes of poppers that I use throughout the year were effective last winter. Those in particular - size 6's with a moderate-length feather tail - were the best choice in the low, clear water that confronted me on my first two trips. However, a slightly larger version still a size 6, proved to be better on the following trips further north. All were used with an 8 -foot, 5-weight outfit and a 9-foot all-mono leader tapered to a 12-pound.

I realize that a lot of folks will find it pretty hard to tear themselves away from the turkey season to go creek-fishing - the same goes with others who look forward to the onset of the dog-walking season for big specks. Just remember that the opportunity is there, and if you plan your trip properly, it's a good one.

And to think of how long I missed out on it because I didn't know it was there...

Pete Cooper is an outdoor and nature writer. He is a regular contributor to ***Louisiana Conservationist.***

Lake Bistineau's Green Giant

Lake Bistineau's "green giant" giant salvinia, has been one of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' (LDWF) most pressing issues as it relates to invasive aquatic plant control. This invasive species is a free-floating aquatic fern that is native to Brazil. The plant has potential to double in biomass every three to five days. Particularly on Lake Bistineau, the plant is growing at tremendous rate, affecting aquatic life, and recreational activities for individuals. LDWF along with other key state agencies are working diligently to combat giant salvinia. Two key factors have been herbicides and tiny bugs - salvinia weevils.

alvinia weevils- Along with herbicides the salvinia weevil has proven to be effective in controlling iant salvinia. The placement of these weevils in infested waterways is part of LDWF's $7.9 million quatic Plant Control Program.

1. Salvinia weevils are shown in a cluster of common salvinia.

2. Close-up of a salvinia weevil on common salvinia

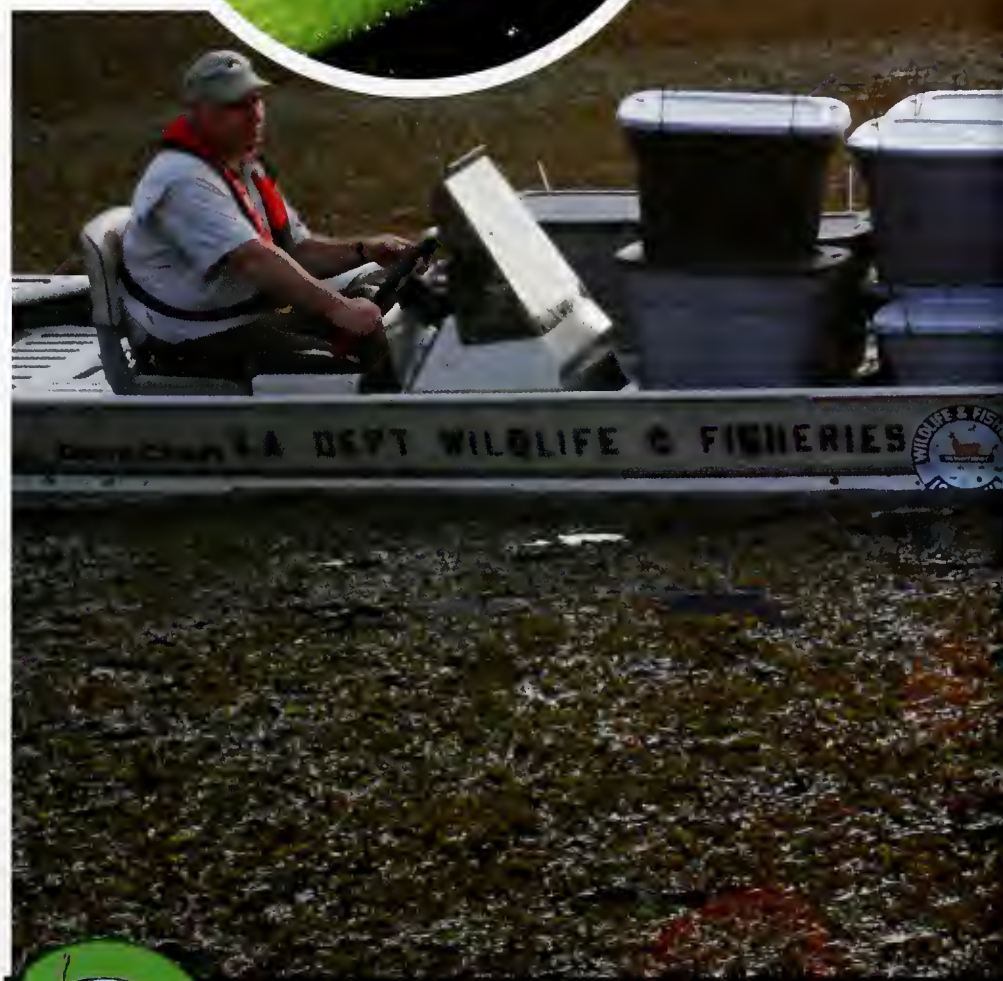
3. LDWF biologist, Brian Heimann is sifting through samples of common salvinia looking for weevils.

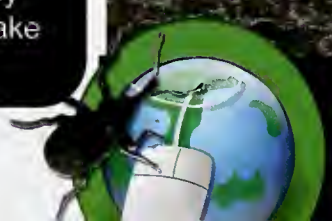
4. Heimann is setting up a method for weevil collection.

5. On Lake Bistineau, there are currently 4,500 acres of giant salvinia. This number is set to decrease once weevils are placed.

6. LDWF biologist and technicians prepare to remove salvinia weevils for placement into lake.

7. LDWF personnel travels by boat to specific area on the lake for weevil placement.





Learn more about LDW

http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/bis

efforts combating giant salvinia online at
u/

LDWF OUTDOOR JOURNAL

LDWF'S CAUGHT IN THE WEB
LDWF Now on Facebook, Twitter and Scribd

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) has thrown its hat into the Web 2.0 ring by creating official accounts on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr and Scribd.

The public can now watch LDWF videos on YouTube, keep up to date with the latest department news on Twitter, become a fan of LDWF on Facebook, read the latest regulations on Scribd and look at department photos on Flickr all free of charge. All of these social media devices are on LDWF's front page at *www.wlf.louisiana.gov.*

"These services offer the department additional channels to use when delivering departmental news, videos, photos or publications to the public," said LDWF Public Information Assistant Director Thomas Gresham. "We are encouraging everybody who utilizes these Web sites to sign up and follow us as we post new videos, photos and news feeds."

The official Web site addresses for each account are listed below:

- *http://www.facebook.com/pages/Baton-Rouge-LA/Louisiana-Department-of-Wildlife-and-Fisheries/112762357891*
- *http://twitter.com/ldwf*
- *http://www.youtube.com/user/LAWildlifeFish*
- *http://www.flickr.com/photos/ldwf/*
- *http://www.scribd.com/ldwf*

LDWF MAKES STRIDES COMBATING GIANT SALVINIA

Salvinia weevil

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' (LDWF) Office of Fisheries is moving large quantities of salvinia weevils into Lake Bistineau in northwest Louisiana as part of a multi-tiered treatment effort to slow the growth of giant salvinia. Lake Bistineau covers 17,200 acres just south of Doyline and is a popular fishing spot for bass and crappie.

"The process began this month and our long-range goal is to restore normal use and aesthetics of the lake for residents and visitors," said LDWF Secretary Robert Barham.

LDWF biologists and technicians plan to place at least 50,000-pounds of weevil-infested salvinia into the lake by the end of June. The floating colonies will be deposited into areas around the lake where salvinia has been growing for at least two years.

Fifty LDWF biologists and technicians from around the state have been involved in the effort that entails harvesting materials from a nursery pond in Lafourche Parish and transporting the weevils to Lake Bistineau. The LSU AgCenter has been raising the weevils in Gheens, La., as part of a cooperative effort between the agencies to find a method to control giant salvinia.

The weevil stocking program is one part of LDWF's $7.9 million Aquatic Plant Control Program for fiscal year 2008-2009 to aggressively combat aquatic plants in the state's waterways. Giant salvinia, a free floating aquatic fern native to Brazil, has the potential to double in biomass every three to five days. It was discovered in Lake Bistineau in February of 2006. The lack of severe winter weather since 2001, with temperatures seldom below freezing for extended periods, has allowed the steady growth of all aquatic plants in the state.

A drawdown from July 2008 through January 2009 reduced the salvinia coverage from 4,500 acres to 850. Subsequent re-growth has increased the salvinia presence back to 4,300 acres as of the first week of June 2009. An increased weevil population on the lake is designed to significantly reduce the long-term presence of giant salvinia.

MATS INSTALLED IMPROVING ROAD ACCESS TO ELMER'S ISLAND

Visitors to Elmer's Island Wildlife Refuge will have improved beach access thanks to the installation of concrete revetment mats on the property. In an effort to provide greater public access to the island, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) with the support of the Grand Isle Port Commission has installed the mats on the beachfront property to improve vehicle stabilization as visitors travel onto the island.

"The department is pleased to be able to provide this property for public use and now we are able to provide access to more individuals by offering more convenient and safer beach travel," said LDWF assistant secretary Randy Pausina. "Our office will continue to address any issues or concerns that may arise as visitation to the area builds."

Installation of the concrete mats was complete prior to Grand Isle's Tarpon Rodeo, held annually during the last weekend of July. The event traditionally attracts more than 15,000 visitors; therefore, the department wanted to ensure that both safe and simple access to the island was available to the public.

The concrete mats, manufactured by Submar, Inc., are used primarily onshore and aid in reducing the risk of vehicles being trapped in the softer areas of the beach. The mats have open areas that allow re-vegetation through them and the design allows for a rapid return to a natural appearance.

The mats extend beyond the existing roadway for 680 feet onto the beach and measure 16 feet in width with a small turning area located at the end.

In July, the department opened road access to Elmer's Island over Independence Day weekend for the first time in nearly a decade. Since that time the island has seen hundreds of visitors. LDWF plans to continue improvements to the property within the upcoming months so visitors may recreate more easily at this popular area while still preserving and protecting the surrounding natural resources.

Those wishing to utilize the island for recreational purposes must possess one of the following:

(1) A valid Wild Louisiana Stamp
(2) A valid Louisiana fishing license
(3) A valid Louisiana hunting license

The island is open every weekend, Friday to Sunday, from a half hour before sunrise to a half hour after sunset.

BOATERS REMINDED OF NEW BOATING REGULATIONS

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Law Enforcement Division (LDWF/LED) is advising boaters to be aware of new boating regulations that will go into effect on Aug. 15, 2009 including new regulations on personal flotation devices (PFD) also known as life jackets.

The recent legislative session produced some new boating regulations that will affect recreational boaters. Here is a summary of the new regulations:

Anyone 16 years of age or younger, onboard a vessel less than 26 feet, is required to wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD while the vessel is underway. The law previously stated that anyone under 12 was required to wear a PFD.

Penalties for driving while intoxicated (DWI) now include the suspension or revocation of boating privileges when a person loses driving privileges due to suspension or revocation of their driver's license due to a DWI or DWI refusal whether the offense took place in a vehicle or a watercraft.

Beginning July 1, 2010, persons born after Jan. 1, 1984 are required to successfully complete a boating education course to operate a motorboat over 10 horsepower. The law previously stated that anyone born after Jan. 1, 1988 was required to complete a course. Operators born between Jan. 1, 1984 and Dec. 31, 1987 have until July 1, 2010 to complete a course.

The LDWF/LED also wants to remind boaters to follow the rules of the road, wear a life jacket and designate a sober vessel operator to keep Louisiana's waterways safe for all boaters.

For more information on regulations or boating safety, please visit our Web site at www.*wlf.louisiana.gov/boating*. For more information on boating education courses please visit *http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/boating/courses*.

Photo courtesy of USFWS

AGENTS OF Change

the evolving role of wildlife and fisheries enforcement agents

Changing Seasons Changing Law

By Maj. Sammy Martin

As August comes to a close and September begins, sportsman across the state begin looking forward to the upcoming hunting season. For LDWF's wildlife enforcement agents it signals a change from the boating season to the hunting season. August also signals the time of year when most new laws that were passed during the legislative session go into effect.

Some of the laws that were passed this past year involve changes to boating regulations. Some may ask, "Why mention these new boating laws when we are changing from boating season to the hunting season?" Well, with the vast waterways in this state, a large majority of those trips to and from the hunting spots involve using a boat, whether it is a boat trip to the duck or deer camp, or a boat trip from the camp to the duck blind, or to the deer stand. With this in mind, it is of the utmost importance to be up to date and aware of any changes to boating laws and regulations not only to adhere to the law but also to stay safe while on the water. These new laws and regulations can be found on our website at *www.wlf.louisiana.gov.*, but here are some that I feel you need to be aware of for the upcoming hunting season.

1) No person born after January 1, 1984, shall operate a motorboat powered by a motor in excess of ten horsepower unless he has successfully completed a boating safety class approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA). A person who has completed an approved boating safety class shall be in possession of evidence of such completion when operating such a boat.

This existing law states that persons born after January 1, 1988 are required to take a boating education course. Persons born between January 1, 1984 and December 31, 1987 have until July 1, 2010 to complete a course. Effective date July 1, 2010.

2) Every person sixteen years or younger on board a Class A(less than 16-feet) or Class 1(16 to less than 26-feet) motorboat or vessel shall wear a coast guard approved life jacket or life preserver while such outboard motorboat or vessel is underway.

The regulation became effective August 15, 2009. This law previously stated that children 12-years old and under were required to wear PFD's. Persons 13-years old or older are exempt while engaged in commercial fishing on a commercial fishing vessel.

3) Penalties for Driving While Intoxicated (D.W.I.) now include the suspension or revocation of boating privileges when a person loses driving privileges due to suspension or revocation of their driver's license due to a D.W.I. or D.W.I. refusal whether the offense took place in a vehicle or a watercraft.

In addition, duck and deer hunters that have changed over to the new type surface drive motorboats (Gatortail, Pro Drive, etc.), need to remember that the majority of these fall within the tiller type steering outboards that have specific regulations that must be followed. Below is a list of those regulations.

1) All persons onboard a Class A (less than 16-feet) motorboat that is propelled by a hand tiller outboard shall be required to wear a USCG approved Type 1, 2, 3, or 5 personal flotation device while the motorboat is underway. A hand tiller outboard is described as an outboard motor that has a tiller or steering arm attached to the outboard motor to facilitate steering and does not have any mechanical assist device which is rigidly attached to the boat and used in steering the vessel, including but not limited to mechanical, hydraulic, or electronic control systems.

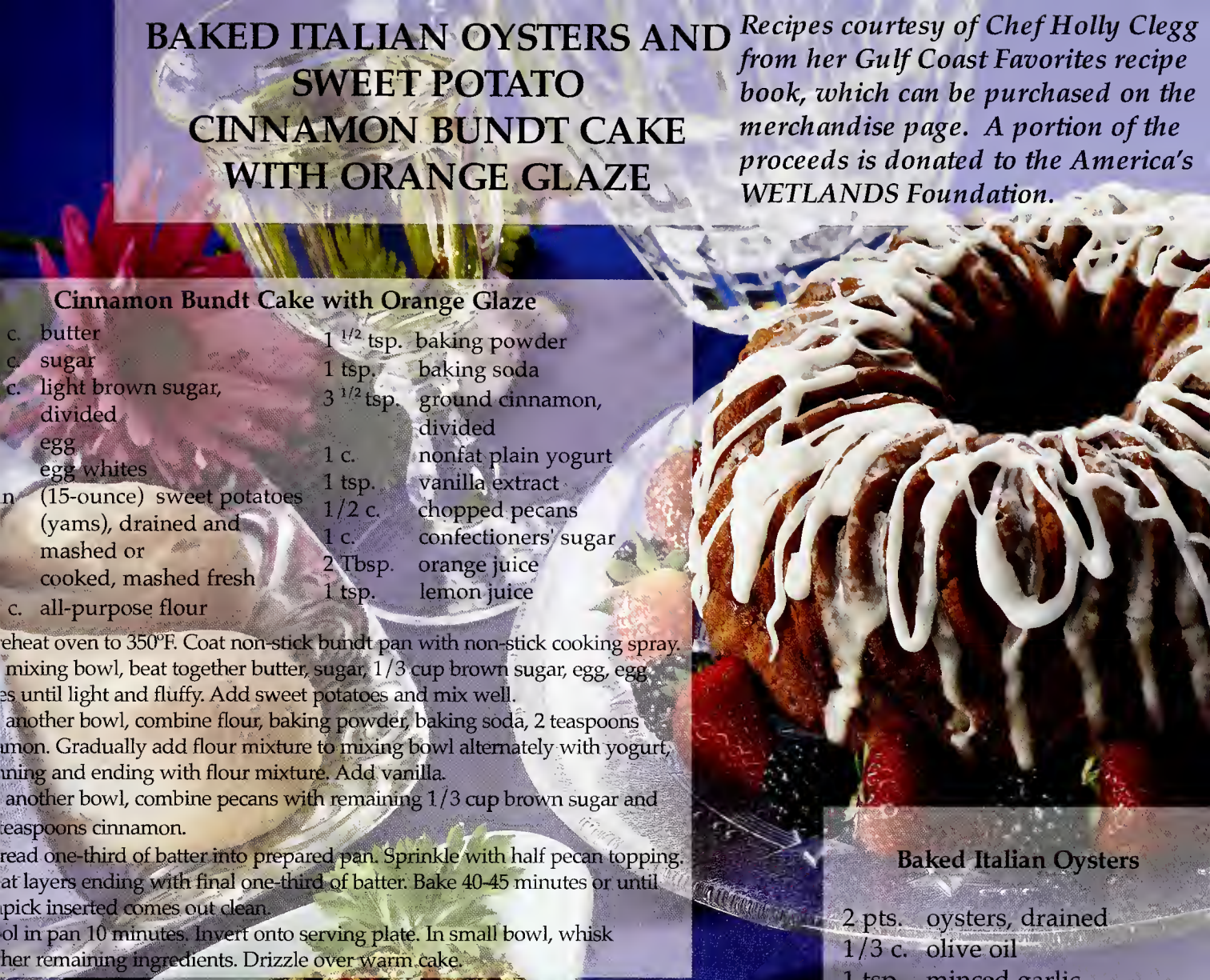
2) No person shall operate a Class A or Class 1 (16-feet to less than 26-feet) motorboat with a hand tiller outboard motor in excess of ten horsepower designed to have an engine cut-off switch, while the engine is running and the motorboat underway unless the engine cut-off switch is fully functional and in an operable condition, and the cut-off switch link is attached to the operator, the operators clothing, or to the operators flotation device if being worn at the time.

Many are aware that traveling by boat to and from hunting areas normally means traveling before daylight or after sunset. Additionally, most hunters know weekends and season openings normally mean that boat launches and waterways will have a high concentration of boaters headed to the hunting areas. So make sure to slow down and operate at a safe speed, keep a sharp lookout, and make sure the navigation lights on your motorboat are working properly before leaving the landing, and make sure to wear your life jacket at all times especially while underway.

Remember, as mentioned earlier, these laws, regulations, and suggestions if followed will not only keep you within the law but also help keep your boating activities safe. Hope you have a safe and successful hunting season this upcoming year.

BAKED ITALIAN OYSTERS AND SWEET POTATO CINNAMON BUNDT CAKE WITH ORANGE GLAZE

Recipes courtesy of Chef Holly Clegg from her Gulf Coast Favorites recipe book, which can be purchased on the merchandise page. A portion of the proceeds is donated to the America's WETLANDS Foundation.



Cinnamon Bundt Cake with Orange Glaze

c.	butter
c.	sugar
c.	light brown sugar, divided
	egg
	egg whites
n	(15-ounce) sweet potatoes (yams), drained and mashed or cooked, mashed fresh
c.	all-purpose flour
1 1/2 tsp.	baking powder
1 tsp.	baking soda
3 1/2 tsp.	ground cinnamon, divided
1 c.	nonfat plain yogurt
1 tsp.	vanilla extract
1/2 c.	chopped pecans
1 c.	confectioners' sugar
2 Tbsp.	orange juice
1 tsp.	lemon juice

eheat oven to 350°F. Coat non-stick bundt pan with non-stick cooking spray.
mixing bowl, beat together butter, sugar, 1/3 cup brown sugar, egg, egg
es until light and fluffy. Add sweet potatoes and mix well.
another bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, 2 teaspoons
mon. Gradually add flour mixture to mixing bowl alternately with yogurt,
ning and ending with flour mixture. Add vanilla.
another bowl, combine pecans with remaining 1/3 cup brown sugar and
easpoons cinnamon.
read one-third of batter into prepared pan. Sprinkle with half pecan topping.
at layers ending with final one-third of batter. Bake 40-45 minutes or until
pick inserted comes out clean.
ol in pan 10 minutes. Invert onto serving plate. In small bowl, whisk
her remaining ingredients. Drizzle over warm cake.

Baked Italian Oysters

2 pts.	oysters, drained
1/3 c.	olive oil
1 tsp.	minced garlic
1/3 c.	chopped parsley
1	bunch green onions, chopped
2 c.	Italian breadcrumbs
1/3 c.	grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 c.	lemon juice

Crushed red pepper

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Place drained oysters on in shallow oblong 2-quart baking dish.
3. In bowl, combine remaining ingredients, spread evenly over oysters. Bake 25-30 minutes or until oysters are done and topping is browned.

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